

# HOW TO WRITE A JOURNAL RESPONSE

## What is a Journal Response?

A **journal response** explains **why you found the parts of the essay to be important or interesting**. Students ask questions about the reading, they wonder about the reading, or they explain it or relate to it in some way. Whatever you do, **DO NOT SIMPLY SUMMARIZE** the contents of the essay. Go beyond it somehow, analyze it, offer thoughts about why it seems important to you. In essence, by writing about the importance of one or more passages in the essay, you will give it meaning—and that is what reading is all about! The quality of your thinking and the energy with which you attempt to analyze your reading are the most important in this assignment.

## How Do I Get Started?

A journal response starts with reading. As you read, mark the text. Underline or highlight the parts that stand out to you as interesting, important, puzzling, confusing, funny or powerful. Not all readers will mark the same parts when they read because not all parts have the same importance to every reader. Your gender, your past experiences, your cultural experiences and many other factors will influence what you find important in a text.

## What Parts Do I Mark?

Readers mark various parts of their texts for various reasons. You might mark the following parts of your text:

- The names of people/character, places and important events;
- Parts of the essay that remind you of personal experiences in your own life;
- Statements in the text that you disagree with or that make you angry or sad;
- Parts of the text that are confusing or problematic (this can include not only ideas but words you do not know—look them up in the dictionary);
- Parts of the text that relate to other parts of the text.
- Parts of the text that relate to a newspaper or magazine article, something you saw on TV, on the Internet, in a book or a source you looked up in the library about the topic.

## Format:

- 1-2 pages long
- Typed, double-spaced
- One inch margins all around
- 12 point, New Times Roman

Name  
Composition I

Date  
Prof.

"Title of Essay"  
Journal Response



# "Salvation"

By Langston Hughes

I was saved from sin when I was going on thirteen. But not really saved. It happened like this. There was a big revival at my Auntie Reed's church. Every night for weeks there had been much preaching, singing, praying, and shouting, and some very hardened sinners had been brought to Christ, and the membership of the church had grown by leaps and bounds. Then just before the revival ended, they held a special meeting for children, "to bring the young lambs to the fold." My aunt spoke of it for days ahead. That night I was escorted to the front row and placed on the mourners' bench with all the other young sinners, who had not yet been brought to Jesus.

My aunt told me that when you were saved you saw a light, and something happened to you inside! And Jesus came into your life! And God was with you from then on! She said you could see and hear and feel Jesus in your soul. I believed her. I had heard a great many old people say the same thing and it seemed to me they ought to know. So I sat there calmly in the hot, crowded church, waiting for Jesus to come to me.

The preacher preached a wonderful rhythmical sermon, all moans and shouts and lonely cries and dire pictures of hell, and then he sang a song about the ninety and nine safe in the fold, but one little lamb was left out in the cold. Then he said: "Won't you come? Won't you come to Jesus? Young lambs, won't you come?" And he held out his arms to all us young sinners there on the mourners' bench. And the little girls cried. And some of them jumped up and went to Jesus right away. But most of us just sat there.

A great many old people came and knelt around us and prayed, old women with jet-black faces and braided hair, old men with work-gnarled hands. And the church sang a song about the lower lights are burning, some poor sinners to be saved. And the whole building rocked with prayer and song.

Still I kept waiting to *see* Jesus.

Finally all the young people had gone to the altar and were saved, but one boy and me. He was a rounder's son named Westley. Westley and I were surrounded by sisters and deacons praying. It was very hot in the church, and getting late now. Finally Westley said to me in a whisper: "God damn! I'm tired o' sitting here. Let's get up and be saved." So he got up and was saved.

Then I was left all alone on the mourners' bench. My aunt came and knelt at my knees and cried, while prayers and song swirled all around me in the little church. The whole congregation prayed for me alone, in a mighty wail of moans and voices. And I kept waiting serenely for Jesus, waiting, waiting - but he didn't come. I wanted to see him, but nothing



happened to me. Nothing! I wanted something to happen to me, but nothing happened.

I heard the songs and the minister saying: "Why don't you come? My dear child, why don't you come to Jesus? Jesus is waiting for you. He wants you. Why don't you come? Sister Reed, what is this child's name?"

"Langston," my aunt sobbed.

"Langston, why don't you come? Why don't you come and be saved? Oh, Lamb of God! Why don't you come?"

Now it was really getting late. I began to be ashamed of myself, holding everything up so long. I began to wonder what God thought about Westley, who certainly hadn't seen Jesus either, but who was now sitting proudly on the platform, swinging his knickerbockered legs and grinning down at me, surrounded by deacons and old women on their knees praying. God had not struck Westley dead for taking his name in vain or for lying in the temple. So I decided that maybe to save further trouble, I'd better lie, too, and say that Jesus had come, and get up and be saved.

So I got up.

Suddenly the whole room broke into a sea of shouting, as they saw me rise. Waves of rejoicing swept the place. Women leaped in the air. My aunt threw her arms around me. The minister took me by the hand and led me to the platform.

When things quieted down, in a hushed silence, punctuated by a few ecstatic "Amens," all the new young lambs were blessed in the name of God. Then joyous singing filled the room.

That night, for the first time in my life but one for I was a big boy twelve years old - I cried. I cried, in bed alone, and couldn't stop. I buried my head under the quilts, but my aunt heard me. She woke up and told my uncle I was crying because the Holy Ghost had come into my life, and because I had seen Jesus. But I was really crying because I couldn't bear to tell her that I had lied, that I had deceived everybody in the church, that I hadn't seen Jesus, and that now I didn't believe there was a Jesus anymore, since he didn't come to help me.



Name

Date

ENC 1101

Prof Flores

“Salvation”

Journal Response

When I first started to read the story “Salvation” the first thought that came to my mind was how can you really understand the real meaning of being saved at such a young age? When I read further into the story I started to realize that Langston didn’t really understand what being saved really meant, and that he just said he was saved just because he wanted to go home from a hot and long service at church. When I look at this story I realize that all ends of the party were wrong. Meaning that Langston, his aunt , and his friend had their faults. But in a way could probably have their own innocence, when Langston’s aunt told him about how he should be saved she described it in a way that was too direct and too specific, so he was looking for those specific things to be saved. She was wrong for putting it in that specific way or giving him an unclear explanation. Giving her the benefit of the doubt there may be a possibility as to where that’s how she was brought up and that’s what she was told at an adolescent age, so she just passed it on to him. The reason I say his friend was wrong is because he lied. All his friend wanted to do was go home so he figured the longer he stayed there next to Langston unsaved then the longer it will take him to get home. Giving Langston’s friend the benefit of the doubt I would say that I don’t really blame him for his actions because he was young. His adolescent mind stopped him from understanding the true meaning of being saved so all he could think of was I want to go home. As for Langston, well it speaks for itself in the last paragraph of the story when its said that he cried later on that night. Langston knew that he was wrong for lying but at the same time just because of the fact that he did not see Jesus the way his aunt said he was



suppose to appear his internal emotions were crushed, and that would be his innocence because the adolescent mind and thought process isn't the same as an adult. To conclude all of this I realize the three main characters have the benefit of the doubt and that they all have some kind of innocence.



## JOURNAL RESPONSE RUBRIC

Criteria	Outstanding 10	Proficient 8	Basic 6	Below Expectations 4	Points
<b>Content</b>	Journal conveys extensive evidence of a personal response to the issues raised in the essay. Student demonstrates personal growth and awareness.	Student conveys evidence of a personal response to the issues raised in the essay. Student demonstrates that he/she is beginning to develop new ways of reflecting on their world.	Analysis conveys little or some evidence of a personal response to the issues/concepts raised in the essay.	No personal response is made to the issues/concepts raised in the essay. Student summarizes the essay.	10
<b>Organization</b>	Ideas are organized in a logical order. Transition words or phrases are used to connect sentences and paragraphs.	Ideas are somewhat organized. Transition words or phrases are somewhat used to connect sentences and paragraphs.	Ideas skip from one idea to another, need to be organized. Transition words or phrases are not used to connect sentences and paragraphs.	No organization is recognized.	10
<b>Format</b>	Journal is at least one page long. Font and font size are correct. Margins are all 1 inch.	Journal is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page long. Font and font size are correct. Margins are all 1 inch.	Journal is less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page long. Font and font size are correct. Margins are all 1 inch.	Journal is less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page long. Font and font size are incorrect. Margins are not all 1 inch.	10
				<b>TOTAL</b>	30